SOUL SEARCHING WITH MALUS DARKBLADE

19 $2.95 US £2.00 UK

WARHAMMER MONTHLY

He wants your soul!

DarkBlade

Plus: Bloodquest • Epiphigium • Gift of the Gods

WARHAMMER MONTHLY

By Khorne! I am in the mood for a fight today! This damnable limbo which that accursed Ultramarine calls 'The Warp' is really starting to get to me. Hey, Baneblade!

Hmm?

Baneblade? Where are you, you miserable wretch? Show yourself, worm, or forever bow down and offer fealty to the unholy lords of Chaos! Where are you?

Mnn... whot? Here...

What's the matter with you, Space Marine? Are you afflicted with the ague? Has the pox got you? Look lively, there! I wish to challenge you to combat – to the death!

Go owoy... I'm busy.

By all that is foul! I will not brook this! Have you no honour, man? No manners or chivalry? I demand it: don't just slouch there. Stand and face me, for I wish to face you in mortal combat!

Yes, yes, you win...

Have you lost all reason? Such cowardice! Look, get up, lest I splice you in two with my soul-sucking broadsword! I demand a fight! A fight, damn you!

Oh, very well.

DAKKA! DAKKA! DAKKA! DAKKA! DAKKA! DAKKA!

(.....)

That's more like it. *Now, if I can just have a bit of* **hush,** *I can get on with reading this brilliant book. Let's see, where was I... 'Ibrom Gaunt to all units! Commence withdrawal, maximum retreating resistance!...'*

NEXT ISSUE

JERICO AND SCABBS HIT THE TREASURE TRAIL, IN THE FIRST EPISODE OF A FOUR-PART EPIC, *THE MOTHERLODE*

Inside this comic...

BLOODQUEST

Trapped in the Eye of Terror, Leonatos and his crew are embroiled in a battle between armies of Chaos – must face the might of an awesome Banelord Titan!

GIFT OF THE GODS

Magnar and his crew of Norse pirates plunder a Tilean merchant ship, but discover the cargo [illegible] deadly curse

EPIPHIGIUM

A force of Iron Snakes Space Marines are [illegible] surrounded by an Eldar warhost. When Chief [illegible] sector their fortress abandoned, [illegible] s a trap.

ZERO OPTION

On an ice-bound world, a despairing Commissar has one chance to keep [illegible] ders at bay

DARKBLADE

The mysterious orb leads Malus to a [illegible] ed palace, which [illegible] comes alive [illegible] n night falls.

GAMES WORKSHOP

A BLACK LIBRARY PUBLICATION

EDITORS Andy Jones & Marc Gascoigne

PRODUCTION Warwick Kinrade & Ian Pickstock

COVER *Malus Darkblade* by Simon Davis

WARHAMMER MONTHLY gifted issue 19, August 1999. Published by Games Workshop Ltd. Willow Rd, Lenton, Nottingham, NG7 2WS, UK.

Email us: *publishing@games-workshop.co.uk*
Internet: *http://www.games-workshop.com*
and: *http://www.blacklibrary.co.uk*

All subject matter in Warhammer Monthly is copyright © Games Workshop Ltd 1999. All rights reserved.

The following are all registered trademarks of Games Workshop Ltd. Citadel, Games Workshop, the Games Workshop logo, Space Marine and Warhammer

The following are all trademarks of Games Workshop Ltd Adepta Sororitas, Black Library, the Black Library logo, Darkblade, Kal Jerico, Khorne, Inferno, Necromunda, Horgle, Redeemer, Tzeentch Printed in England.

PRODUCT CODE: 6056 9999 019

SOMEWHERE IN THE WARP

LETTER OF THE MONTH

• I must say I'm very pleased that Games Workshop has finally brought out a comic. Having been a fan of the hobby since 1984 I remember when I first heard of such plans and how disappointed I was when nothing seemed to happen for what seemed like ages (and actually was ages). Well, let us return to the present: the comic is great and enriches the atmosphere of the whole GW hobby. Congratulations on the new strips. Bloodquest is especially good, and please tell old Kaleb Daark to get out of the cupboard, don his black armour and hit the road again. Let the galaxy burn (but not too fast).

— Oliver Martin (who feels like a Necron for being so old to remember that stuff – and no, I do not miss Thrudd and Gobbledigook, who used to grace(?) the pages of White Dwarf; old maybe, raving mad, not yet), via e-mail

It is always good to hear from long-time hobbyists; although I've never heard of this Kaleb Daark, but I'm sure Malus Darkblade would eat him for breakfast! In the meantime, let that galaxy burn on your prize t-shirt.

• I'm impressed with the comic, and well done with the 'Best New British Comic' award. Well deserved in my humble opinion. I love the stories, but I think some longer ones with more depth and character development in would be great. Judge Dredd, the Marvel Super Heroes, even the Transformers did long-running, continuous sagas, and were much the better for it. However, short stories can be cool, too, as the excellent 'Pockets' showed. More of the same quality, please!

Finally, how does one get int ouch with Dark Eldar Craftworld leaders? Karranie STraan sounds like my kind of person... although Tzeentch is a far better patron to my mind.

— Matt Smith, Cheltenham, Terra

• My name is Frederic and I collect an army of Chaos Dwarfs. And I am begging you please!!! You must make the Dwarfs from Dwarflords as miniatures!!! Please, I beg you!!!

— A mad Dwarf Moge, via e-mail

• Why doesn't anybody write stories about Orks (or Orcs) and the other alien races? Everything is human or humanish. A story about an Ork Waaghi could be very interesting. Variety is the spice of life. Very rarely do we have stories about Eldar or Dark Eldar. 40K is about more than just humans...

— Bloster, via e-mail

Because they are worthless alien scum who deserve death at the hands of Emperor's loyal servants, that's why! Oh, and because we do too many strips featuring them already, apparently.

• Warhammer Monthly rocks!!! I love the idea of reading about the adventures of the heroes of the Warhammer universe. My favourite strip so far is Darkblade, Ravenwing and Inquisitor, Hail the Emperor! The only complaint is the lack of High Elf stories. I am an avid fan of Elves, Space Marines, Slaanesh and the Dogs of War. Having said that, keep up the good work!

— Dave Duggon, via e-mail

• It's been a while since I wrote to you, but since it costs twice as much to write to you from America I don't send in letters about every issue. Still after Ravenwing I had to send some thoughts. Basically Ravenwing was the worst strip to date. It sucked; it wes just too implausible. I know there's a certain 'willing suspension of disbelief' in any comic material but there is a difference between stories that make you go 'cool!' and those that make the reader go 'gimme a break!'

As to things I'd like, how about a new Titan story, but this time with better art. I'd like to see Titan done like Daemonifuge. How about imperios Dictatio fighting Tyranids this time? We've seen enough Ork fighting in Bloodquest (yum) and Ravenwing (yuk).

Well that's enough for now. Oh, Baneblade! Great joke you pulled on that Chaos cretin Gutspew! I loved the look on his face! Next time how about smearing caviar on a frag grenade and telling him it's an hors d'oeuvre?

— Russ Bullman, East Alton, USA

A Warlord Titan fighting Tyranids, eh? Are you a secret psyker? For how else could you have predicted that Imperius Dictatio will be back very soon, to face the foul menace of Hive Fleet Kraken?! I think inquisitor Defay would like a word with you! Now to someone who does write in almost every issue...

• Warhammer Monthly 15 was another splendid issue, the stand-out performance going to Dwarflords. Was it me or does Mr Davidson look like John Lennon? This final episode featured his best story-telling yet. Superb!!

Here's an idea: Warhammer Monthly movies. May I suggest Robert Carlyle as Kal Jerico and Stephen Fry as Cardinal Crimson? Any other readers got casting ideas?

— Lee Davis, Edmonton, London

• I just thought I'd drop you a line and tell you that the new line of novels is going to be great! I have almost all of the previous line of novels and loved reading them. Are you planning on eventually reprinting all of the old novels in some form?

Finally I just received my limited edition Leonatos figure in the mail today. He looks pretty good to me, but I'm a little disappointed that I missed out on Kal Jerico. I do think that the US readers miss out on the really nifty special offers in the UK. Thanks for your time, guys.

— Kent Plumb, via e-mail

• Hello, I'd just like to say that Warhammer Monthly is the best comic I've ever read. I recently bought Whhe Dwarf 232 and got the free birthday issue edition. Since I'm collecting a Dark Elf army I really love the strip about Malus Darkblade.

— Faithful follower Bill Cooper, via e-mail

Then check out the details for ordering the Malus Darkblade miniature later in this issue, and the wicked one can take his place amongst the rest of your army!

Remember, the best letter will win a Black Library t-shirt. You can send prayers, news of victorious battles and other joyous tidings to:

Warhammer Monthly
The Black Library
Games Workshop Ltd
Willow Rd
Lenton
Nottingham
NG7 2WS • UK

or use an Astropath to transmit it through the ether to:

publishing@games-workshop.co.uk

BLOODQUEST
EPISODE TWO
Script GORDON RENNIE ✠ Art COLIN MACNEIL
Letters FIONA STEPHENSON
WAR WITHOUT END! CARNAGE AND SLAUGHTER FOR NO PURPOSE OTHER THAN THE WHIM OF VAST FORCES WHO CARE NOTHING FOR THE UNTOLD NUMBERS WHO FIGHT AND DIE IN THEIR NAMES
HERE ON ONE OF THE MANY DAEMON WORLDS WITHIN THE EYE OF TERROR, SEE NOW THE TRUE FACE OF CHAOS...
SPARE NO-ONE FRIEND OR ENEMY, ALL MUST DIE. KILL THEM ALL AND LET LORD KHORNE RECOGNISE HIS OWN!

LEONATOS AND HIS BLOOD ANGELS DO NOT KNOW WHERE THEY ARE OR WHY THE POWERS OF THE WARP HAVE SPARED THEM. TRAPPED HERE, THEY KNOW ONLY ONE THING
IF THIS IS HELL, THEN IT SHALL NOT CLAIM THEM WITHOUT A FIGHT!
CONTROLLED BURSTS! CONSERVE BOLTER SHELLS AND GUARD EACH OTHERS BACKS!
HAH! WECOME BROTHER RENEGADE! WHAT WARBAND ARE YOU WITH? WHICH SIDE DO YOU FIGHT FOR BROTHER?
NOT YOURS CHAOS FILTH.
BRAK!
WELL SAID BROTHER-CAPTAIN BUT I HAVE A BETTER WAY
WHY BOTHER WASTING BOLTER SHELLS ON THESE SCUM, WHEN THERE ARE SO MANY MORE INTERESTING WAYS TO KILL THEM!

KEEP FIRING! WE MUST FIGHT OUR WAY CLEAR OF THIS MADNESS!
IT IS NO USE MY LORD THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM! THEY FIGHT ALL AROUND US AND WE DO NOT HAVE THE FIREPOWER TO CLEAVE A WAY THROUGH THEM
BLOOD OF SANGUINIUS--!
BROTHER-CAPTAIN- LOOK OUT!
SHROOOOM!
LEONATOS HAS SEEN TITANS BEFORE GOD MACHINES OF THE IMPERIUM OF MANKIND CASTING THE SHADOW OF THE EMPEROR'S MIGHT ACROSS A THOUSAND BATTLEFIELDS
HE HAS SEEN THEM RAZE CITIES PUT WHOLE ARMIES TO FLIGHT
HE HAS NEVER SEEN ONE SUCH AS THIS BEFORE
DOOM
DOOM
SPLAAT CH!

CHAOS THING
DAEMON HOST
BANELORD ARCANE TECHNOLOGY AND LIVING FLESH FUSED TOGETHER AS ONE BLASPHEMOUS WHOLE
DOOM DOOM DOOM
CLOTEN LYSANDER. NO!
YOU HAVE A BETTER WAY, BROTHER SERGEANT?
FWAK!
WE ARE TRAPPED HERE BUT NOW SANGUINIUS HAS SENT US AN UNLIKELY SAVIOUR
NOW WHO'S COMING WITH US?

MADNESS FOOLHARDY MADNESS!
MAYBE SO BUT IT WOULD SEEM TO BE THE ONLY CHANCE WE'VE GOT
WE JOURNEYED INTO THE EYE OF TERROR WE'VE FOUGHT DAEMONS AND FACED THE FURY OF POWERS OF THE WARP
LIEGE CA-TAIN! SERGEANT TRANIO!
WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES ONE MORE ACT OF MADNESS MAKE!?
KATCH
AND NOW BROTHER-CAPTAIN?
DO YOU REMEMBER THE WINGS OF SANGUINIUS TRANIO? ONE OF THE TESTS OF BRAVERY YOU UNDERWENT AS A YOUNG WARRIOR BACK ON BAAL SECONDUS?
WAITING ON A CLIFFTOP FOR AN APPROACHING DUST STORM RIDING THE STORM ON YOUR WINGS OF WOOD AND HIDE NOT KNOWING IF THE WINDS WOULD CARRY YOU TO SAFETY OR LEAVE YOUR SMASHED BODY FOR THE DESERT CREATURES TO FEED ON

THAT IS WHAT WE DO NOW TRANIO
WE RIDE THE HURRICANE
CHAOS THING DAEMON HOST SLAUGHTER KING IF IT EVEN NOTICES THE PUNY THINGS CLINGING TO ITS ARMOURED HIDE IT GIVES NO INDICATION
JUST AS IT TAKES NO NOTICE OF THE TEEMING THINGS SO EASILY CRUSHED UNDERFOOT
IT BELIEVES THEY CANNOT HURT IT. THESE PUNY THINGS
THEY CAN
WE ARE READY BROTHER CAPTAIN KRAK GRENADES AND MELTA CHARGES ARE SET AND THIS MAY BE AS CLOSE TO THE BATTLES EDGE AS WE'LL GET
CHARGES FOR FIVE SECONDS DETONATION AND SEEK HARD COVER
NOT A LARGE EXPLOSION BUT ENOUGH TO ACHIEVE ITS PURPOSE
GEARS JAM SERVO MOTORS SCREAM IN PROTEST PISTONS BUCKLE AND GIVE WAY AND ONE OF THE MOST AWESOME SIGHTS OF 41ST MILLENNIUM WARFARE OCCURS

TITANFALL!
KROOM!!!
FOR THE SURVIVORS ALREADY SWARMING OVER IT, A CHANCE FOR REVENSE ONCE THEY HAVE FINISHED WITH IT THEIR NEVER ENDING BATTLE WILL CONTINUE
FOR LEONATOS AND HIS BATTLE BRETHREN, A CHANCE FOR ESCAPE LEAVING BEHIND THEM THE HORRORS OF THIS PLACE
AHEAD OF THEM, A WHOLE WORLD OF EVEN GREATER HORRORS STILL AWAITS
TO BE CONTINUED

THE GREAT OCEAN, 'THE WORLDSEA' TO THE NORSEMEN WHO HAVE BEEN SAILING IT FOR CENTURIES, RAIDING, TRADING OR EXPLORING AS SUITS THEIR BARBARIC WHIM.
NOW, IN THE WATERS BETWEEN ARABY AND THE OLD WORLD, A NORSE LONGSHIP COMES UPON AN EASY PRIZE--
HAH! A TILEAN MERCHANT SHIP! LET US PRAY IT'S ONE OF THE SHIPS OF THAT DOG, THE PRINCE OF LUCCINI...
Gift of the gods
--script Gordon Rennie · art Simon Davis · letters Gordon Robson
WE'LL PUT ITS CREW TO THE SWORD AND SEIZE ITS CARGO IN PAYMENT FOR THAT MERCENARY GOLD HE ONCE CHEATED US OF!
OUTNUMBERED BY THE SAVAGE NORSEMEN THE FATE OF THE VESSEL'S CREW WAS NEVER IN DOUBT--
SEE ULLI DIDN'T I SAY THE GODS WOULD NOT FORGET US? FIRST THEY SEND US A FAIR WIND FOR HOME, AND NOW A RICH MERCHANTMAN TO PLUNDER!
AYE MAGNAR BUT REMEMBER WHAT THE SAGAS SAY--

'BEWARE THE GIFTS OF THE GODS FOR THEY OFTEN COME AT A HIDDEN PRICE!'
BY THE RAVENS, ULLI, THE GODS DO NOT MERELY FAVOUR US THEY HAVE BLESSED US!
WE'VE HAD SCANT PICKINGS ON THIS VOYAGE, BUT NOW WE'LL RETURN HOME RICHER THAN THE GREATEST JARL!
MAGNAR, LISTEN TO ME...
A SHIP ADRIFT FAR FROM ANY TRADE ROUTE? A HOLD FULL OF DEAD MEN AND ARABY GOLD? DO YOU NOT SENSE THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG HERE?
HE CANNOT, NORSCAN. HIS EYES ARE BLINDED BY GREED, AS WERE MINE BEFORE HIM...
WHEN WE RAIDED THE TOMB OF AN ARABY SULTAN, WE THOUGHT ONLY OF THE RICHES IT WOULD BRING US.
BUT THEN CAME THE STORMS THAT BLEW US OFF COURSE AND THE SICKNESS AND A MADNESS THAT TURNED US AGAINST EACH OTHER.
SO TAKE YOUR PRIZE, NORSCAN, AND MAY IT BRING YOU AS MUCH GOOD FORTUNE AS IT HAS BROUGHT TO US...

'HAVE THE TREASURE HOISTED ABOARD THE LONGSHIP. IF THERE'S ANY CURSE HERE, IT'LL LIE ON THE OCEAN FLOOR ALONG WITH THE REST OF THIS ROTTING HULK!'
YOU HEARD WHAT HE SAID, MAGNAR. WE SHOULD--
I HEARD THE RAVINGS OF A DYING LUNATIC, NOTHING MORE.
OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS, MAGNAR'S CREW WOULD HAVE CAUSE TO REFLECT ON THEIR CAPTAIN'S WORDS AS THEIR VOYAGE HOME WAS INTERRUPTED FIRST BY STORMS AND THEN BY OTHER STRANGE MALADIES...
ANOTHER THREE DEAD THIS MORNING. AND FOUR MORE THAT WON'T SEE SUNSET TONIGHT.
IT IS AS THE TILEAN SAID. FIRST THE STORMS, THEN THE SICKNESS AND NOW THE VERY WINDS HAVE ABANDONED US!
IT IS THE CURSE, WHEN WE RAIDED THE HOLD OF THAT TILEAN SHIP, WE TOOK ABOARD MORE THAN STOLEN ARABY GOLD!
WHAT BEWITCHMENT IS THIS, THAT HAS TURNED YOU ALL INTO FRIGHTENED OLD WOMEN? WHAT MADNESS HAS POSSESSED YOU, THAT YOU WOULD THROW AWAY A FORTUNE IN GOLD?
AYE. MADNESS IT WILL BE, MAGNAR...

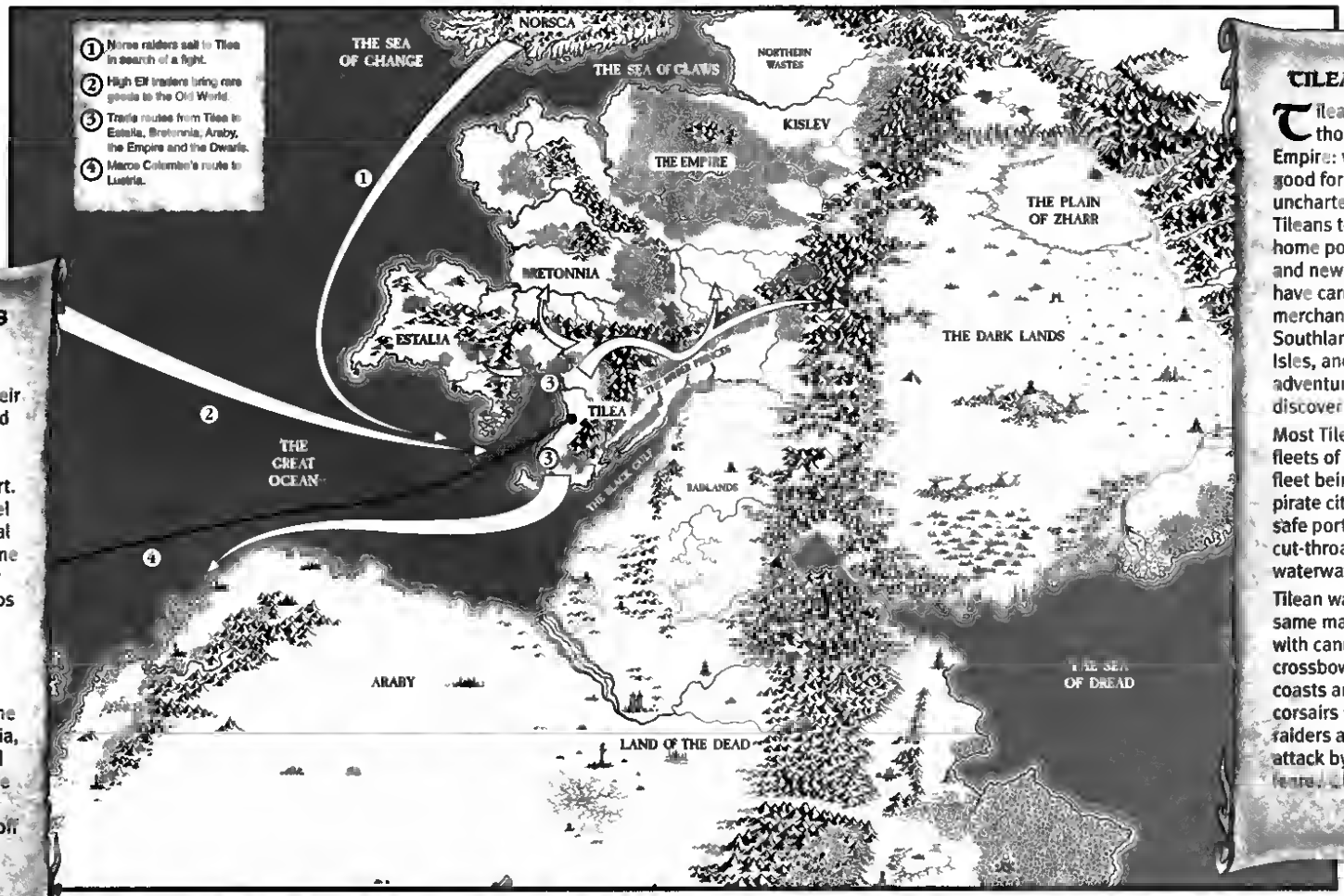
THE MADNESS THAT THE TILEAN WARNED US OF, THE SAME MADNESS THAT WILL TAKE US ALL IF WE DO NOT THROW ALL THAT CURSED GOLD OVER THE SIDE!
SO BE IT...
COWARDLY DOGS! MUTINOUS CURS!
IT'S MY GOLD, AND I'LL NOT SURRENDER IT TO OATHBREAKING SCUM LIKE YOU!
MY GOLD, YOU HEAR ME? MY GOLD, AND I'LL LET NO MAN TAKE IT FROM ME!

DRIFTING ON THE UNPREDICTABLE CURRENTS OF THE GREAT OCEAN, IT IS MONTHS BEFORE THE LONGSHIP IS FOUND--
ITS FINDERS, A BAND OF CUT-THROATS FROM THE PIRATE ISLE OF SARTOSA!
RANALD'S FAVOUR, AND I FEARED WE MIGHT HAVE TO RETURN TO PORT EMPTY-HANDED ON THIS VOYAGE!
NAAAAAAOH!!! MY GOLD.... MY GOLD...!!!
CAPTAIN, LOOK OUT!
A MADMAN, DRIVEN INSANE BY THIRST AND ISOLATION!
NO MATTER. WHAT'S HIS IS OURS NOW.
WE'LL TAKE HIS PRECIOUS GOLD AND LEAVE HIM TO ROT HERE WITH THE REST OF HIS SHIPMATES.
AFTER THAT, WE CAN GET DOWN TO THE BUSINESS OF DISCUSSING THE DIVISION OF SPOILS...

THE END

SEAS OF THE OLD WORLD

Most races have some knowledge of the seas of the Old World, but a few have become masters of them, explorers and traders par excellence. They brave storms, pirates and terrible sea monsters to find new lands and the treasures they hold.



NORSE RAIDERS

The men of Norsca have traditionally turned to the sea for their livelihoods. Icy seas and long winter nights conspire to make life in the north hard and short. A cruel land makes cruel people, fierce and brutal warriors, equally at home with oar or sword. They set sail in their longships on great voyages, seeking plunder and adventure. In the past Norse raiders have ravaged the coasts of the Empire, Kislev, Bretonnia, Tilea, Araby, Estalia and even Ulthuan. They have also established the colony of Skeggi in far-off Lustria.

TILEAN MERCHANTS

Tilean vessels are much like those of Bretonnia or the Empire: wooden sailing ships, good for long voyages into uncharted oceans. This allows Tileans to venture far from their home ports in pursuit of trade and new realms. These ships have carried explorers and merchants as far as the Southlands and the Dragon Isles, and helped the famous adventurer Marco Colombo to discover Lustria.

Most Tilean cities have large fleets of galleys, the largest fleet being that of Remas. The pirate city of Sartosa offers a safe port for the corsairs and cut-throats which plague the waterways of the Old World.

Tilean war galleys are of the same make, but are equipped with cannons and crewed by crossbowmen to defend the coasts and trade routes from corsairs from Araby, Norse raiders and the occasional attack by Dark Elves in their [illegible] Black Arks.

DEEP SEA MONSTERS

The old sea captains of the Old World know only too well the dangers of the deep oceans. The darkness beneath the waves is home to some truly terrifying monsters with mythical status, like the whale-like Behemoth, the coiled serpent Gargantuan, the giant squid Kraken, the great shark Megaldon and fire-breathing Sea Dragons. All are rumoured to be huge creatures capable of swallowing a ship and its crew whole...

HIGH ELVES

The High Elves of Ulthuan are the greatest seafarers in the Old World. No nation can match their knowledge of the sea and all its mysteries. No ship can match the speed of an Elf Dragonship or the skill of its sailors. Elven shipwrights carve beautiful slender craft, fitting them with sweeping silk sails and streamlined catamaran hulls which skim across the water. It is in these craft that High Elf explorers and traders have traversed the entire world.

EPIPHIGIUM

SCRIPT DAN ABNETT

ART PAUL STAPLES • LETTERS FIONA STEPHENSON

A TALE OF THE IRON SNAKES
PETROK LET ME TELL YOU ABOUT PETROK
EVEN IN THE EARLY DAYS, HE HAD PROMISE
A LEXICANIUM OF GREAT POTENTIAL. ONE WHO WOULD SERVE THE IRON SNAKES WELL AND BRING GLORY TO THE CHAPTER HOUSE ON KARIBDYS
BUT HOW MUCH PROMISE I ONLY REALISED THAT DAY ON SANZAR

THE ACCURSED ALIEN ELDAR HAD RAIDED SANZAR, DESTROYING THE IMPERIAL MINING HIVES
WITH ME FIRETEAM FORMATION
ONLY A MEAGRE GARRISON OF IRON SNAKES REMAINED, COMMANDED BY PETROK.
WATCH YOUR SPACING BE VIGILANT
WE HAD BEEN SENT TO RELIEVE THEM
TACTICALLY, THE RAVINE WAS A DEATH TRAP
BUT I HAD USED PRESCIENCE TO JUDGE MY ACTIONS
MAKING US SEEM VULNERABLE WOULD DRAW THE ENEMY OUT AND INTO THE RANGE OF OUR WEAPONS
NOW! THEY SHOW THEMSELVES! OPEN FIRE!

CHOOSE YOUR TARGETS! SLAY THEM ALL!
LET NONE SURVIVE!
ADVANCE!
MY MIND PROBED FOR OTHERS HIDDEN IN THE ROCK BUT WE WERE CLEAR.

IT WOULD TAKE THE ALIEN HERETICS LONG MINUTES TO REGROUP OUR WAY TO THE GARRISON BASE WAS CLEAR.
I SENSED LIFE AND WARMTH WITHIN. I THANKED THE EMPEROR WE WERE IN TIME TO SAVE *SOME* LIVES
IRON SNAKES OF KARIBDYS! BE OF GOOD HEART! WE ARE HERE TO RELIEVE YOUR SUFFERING!
CHIEF LIBRARIAN NECTOR. THERE IS *NO ONE* HERE
SEAL THE GATES!
SEARCH THE GARRISON! THERE IS LIFE HERE SOMEWHERE. I AM *SURE* OF IT.

NOTHING, SIR! THE WALL CANNONS ARE SET TO AUTOMATIC, AS IS THIS DISTRESS BEACON
IN THE BLOCKHOUSE ARE BIOPLASM UNITS GENERATING THE SEMBLANCE OF LIFE SIGNS
THE GARRISON HAS BEEN RIGGED TO SEEM AS IF IT IS STILL OCCUPIED
IT IS A TRAP LORD NECTOR
HOW COULD I MAKE A MISTAKE LIKE THIS? WAS I GETTING OLD?
I HAD BEEN SO SURE THERE WERE STILL BRETHREN HERE ON SANZAR TO SAVE
IT SEEMED I HAD TRULY LED MY MEN INTO A TRAP, AND THAT TRAP WAS ABOUT TO CLOSE...
THEY COME! ELDAR ALL AROUND! BRACE FOR ATTACK!
NOW MY BRAVE IRON SNAKES WOULD PAY FOR MY MISTAKE, AND I WOULD GO TO DEATH WONDERING HOW I READ THE SIGNS SO WRONG...

THERE WERE HUNDREDS OF THE FOE
NO DOUBT THE *ENTIRE* RAIDING FORCE WAITING IN SECRET UNTIL WE HAD TAKEN THE BAIT
I BEGAN THE LITANIES OF BATTLE ROUSING MY MEN WITH THE HOLY CHANT SO THAT THEY WOULD ACHIEVE ALL IN THEIR POWER BEFORE DEATH OVERTOOK THEM
AND THEN

THE TRAP WAS SPRUNG
...AS BROTHER IRON SNAKES BURST FROM CONCEALED POSITIONS...
...TO DESTROY THE ALIEN HORDE!
PETROK

LEXICANIUM PETROK
HAIL CHIEF LIBRARIAN
THE TRAP WAS YOURS NOT THE FOE'S
FORGIVE ME, CHIEF LIBRARIAN BUT I WANTED TO LURE THEM ALL OUT INTO THE OPEN SO THAT WE MIGHT STRIKE DECISIVELY
WE LAY IN CONCEALMENT IT WAS VITAL YOUR EFFORTS TO RESCUE THE GARRISON LOOKED BELIEVABLE
THEY HAD TO BE CONFIDENT ENOUGH TO SHOW THEIR FULL FORCE
A BRILLIANT RISKY STRATEGY HAD I NOT USED A VERSION OF THE SAME SUBTERFUGE WHEN I LED MY MEN INTO THE RAVINE TO DRAW THE ELDAR OUT?
PETROK HAD THE WIT AND THE DARING TO TRY IT ON A GRANDER SCALE
HIS INSIGHT HAD NOT JUST WON A BATTLE IT HAD CRUSHED THE RAIDERS ENTIRELY AND LIBERATED SANZAR
FROM THAT DAY I KNEW I SHOULD WATCH THE YOUNG PETROK CLOSELY THERE WAS GLORY IN HIM. GLORY I COULD ONLY GUESS AT
FROM THE RECOLLECTIONS OF NECTOR, CHIEF LIBRARIAN, IRON SNAKES, KARIBDYS 456.M41
THE END... AND THE BEGINNING

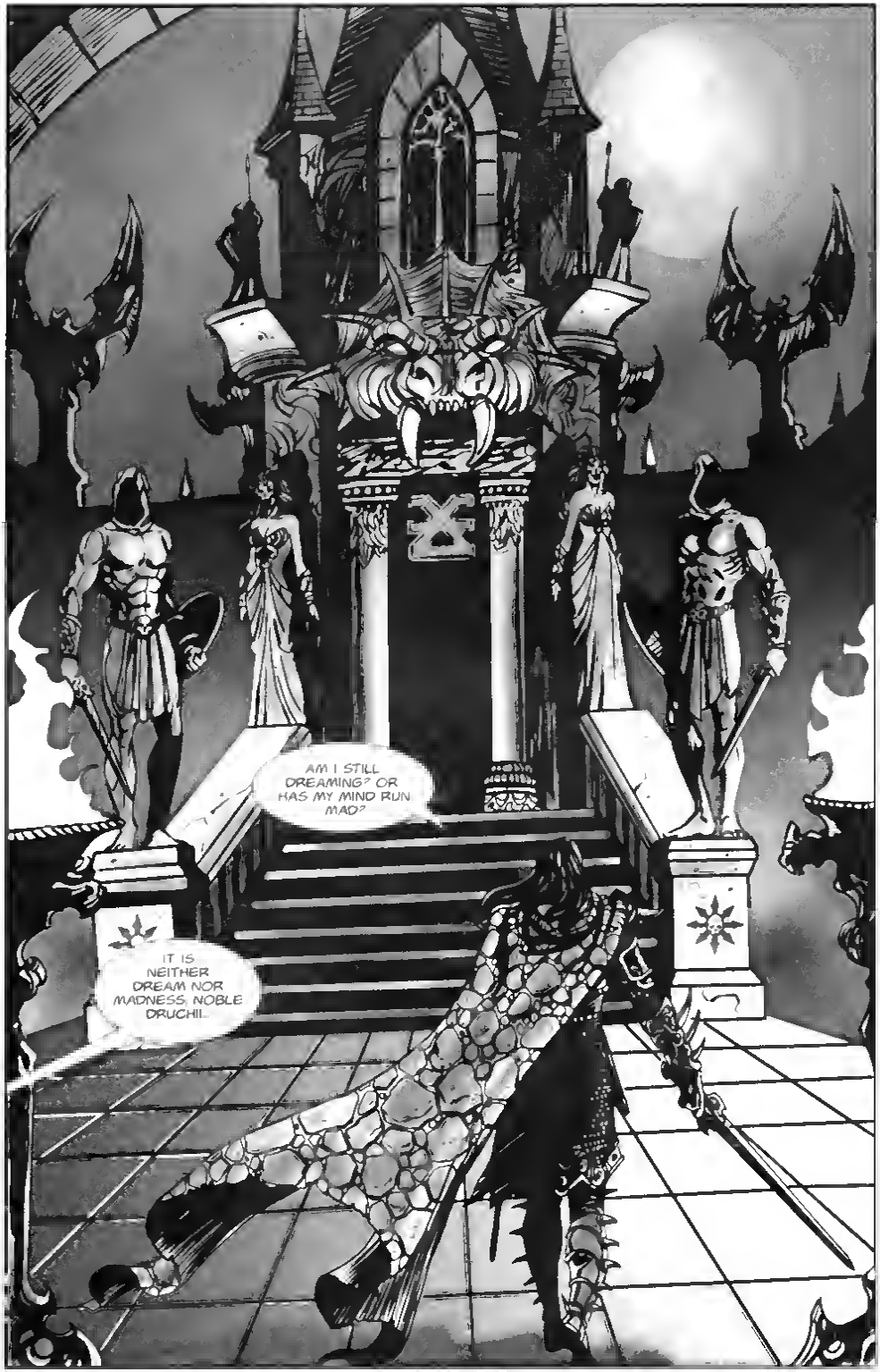
ZERO·OPTION
SCRIPT, DAN ABNETT
ART/LETTERS, DAVID PUGH
IMPERIAL OUTPOST 492, ON THE FROZEN WILDERNESS THAT IS BALANOS ALPHA...
FOR A MONTH NOW, THE IMPERIAL GUARDS OF THE FIFTH THRATIAN REGIMENT HAVE BEEN UNDER SEIGE.
FOR COMMISSAR HOLM IT IS A QUESTION OF WHAT WILL GET THEM FIRST... THE ORK ARMY OR THE BITTER COLD.
THIS IS MADNESS, COMMISSAR! WE CANNOT HOLD THIS POSITION! WE'RE ALL DEAD FOR SURE.
SILENCE, TROOPER JANSEN! I'LL NOT HEAR ANY MORE OF THAT WEAK PRATTLE.
BUT OUR RATIONS ARE GONE, SIR. HOW LONG CAN WE HOPE TO LAST! THEY WILL BUTCHER US ALL IF WE DON'T FREEZE OR STARVE FIRST!
IF IT TAKES EVERY LAST ONE OF US, WE WILL STILL FIGHT! IN THE NAME OF THE EMPEROR, IT IS OUR DUTY!

WERE YOU BORN WITHOUT A SPINE, SOLVINE, OR DID YOU JUST LOSE IT ON THE WAY?
WE ARE OUT OF OPTIONS... EXCEPT FOR THE ONE SIMPLE FACT THAT WE MUST FIGHT!
THE ONLY THING PREVENTING THE ORKS FROM MAKING A DIRECT ASSAULT IS THE SIGHT OF OUR FORCES RANGED ALONG THE WALL!
BACK TO YOUR POST. THIS SHOW OF STRENGTH IS ALL THAT IS KEEPING US ALIVE NOW.
THE FIRST MAN TO DESERT HIS POST WILL FEEL MY WRATH WE WILL HOLD THIS FORTRESS!
WE WILL DO AND WE WILL DIE! THAT IS THE WAY OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD!
COMMISSAR HOLM! LOOK! DO YOU SEE IT?
SPACE MARINES SIR! WE ARE SAVED! THEY HAVE COME TO LIBERATE US.

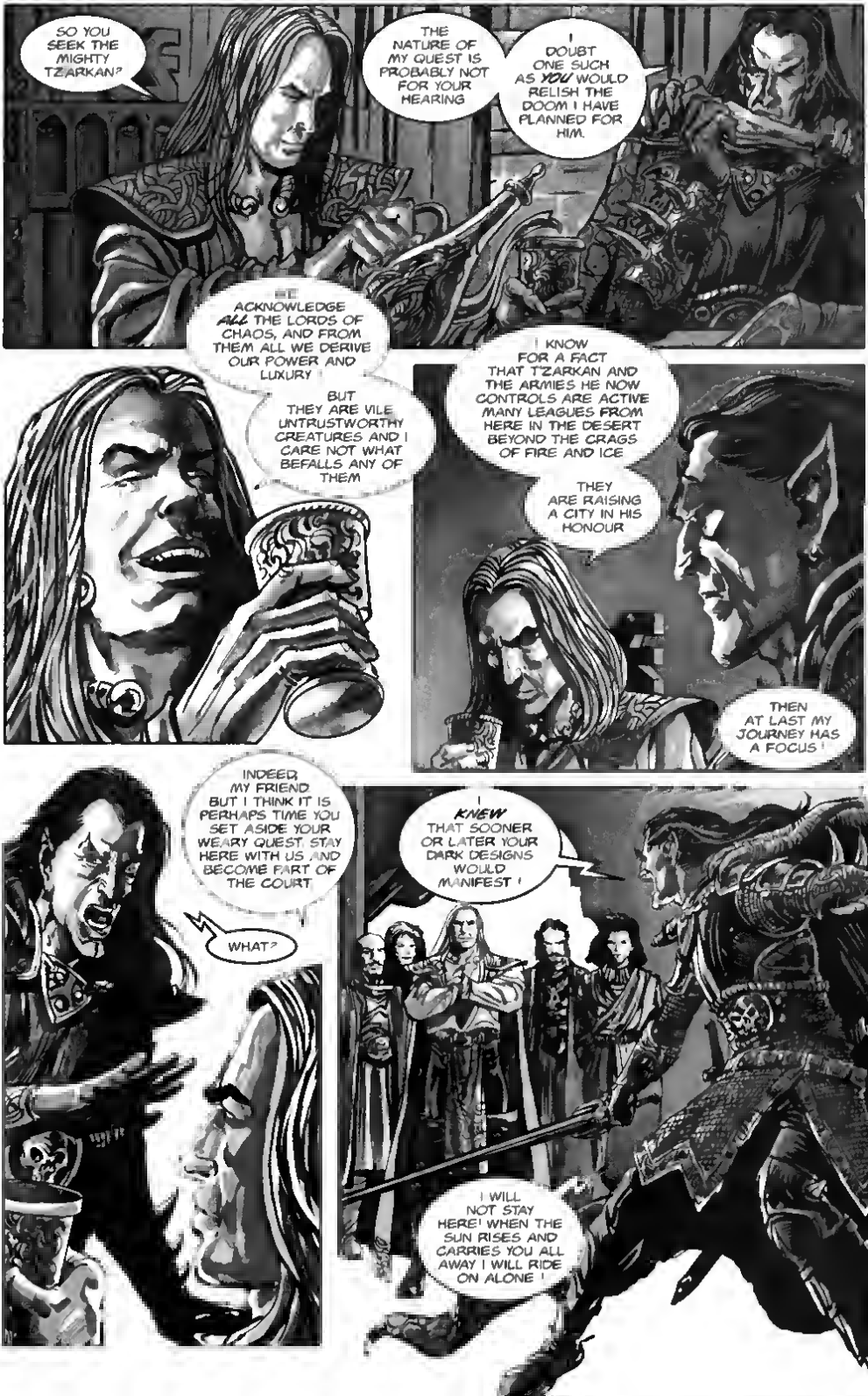
"YOUR MEN DID WELL, COMMISSAR..."
...HOLDING THE ORK FORCES HERE LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO COUNTER-STRIKE IT MUST HAVE TAKEN A LOT TO KEEP YOUR MEN FOCUSED.
WE DID WHAT WE HAD TO DO.
THEY ARE ALL HERE.
THE ONLY ONES THAT THE COLD DID NOT GET.
TRANSPORT'S ON ITS WAY. ASSEMBLE YOUR TROOPS.
"WE LEFT THEM WHERE THEY FROZE. THE APPEARANCE OF NUMBERS WAS ALL THAT HELD THE ORKS AT BAY."
"GUARDSMEN SERVE THE EMPEROR WITH THEIR LIVES... AND SOMETIMES EVEN WITH THEIR DEATHS."
END

FOR MONTHS, MALUS DARKBLADE HAS QUESTED INTO THE WASTELANDS OF CHAOS TO RECOVER HIS SOUL FROM THE RANK DAEMON TZARKAN
HE FOLLOWS THE PROPHESIES OF THE ORB OF MALKIN, A DECEITFUL TRINKET THAT IS NOT AS CANDID IN ITS FORETELLING AS HE WOULD HAVE LIKED
IT HAS LED HIM HERE, TO A PLACE WHERE HE MIGHT LEARN OF THE DAEMONS WHEREABOUTS
DarkBlade
BOOK II
Part 2
The Court of th' Dark Prince
BUT INSTEAD HE FINDS...
NOTHING!
CURSE YOU, BAUBLE! YOU SHOWED ME THIS PALACE AS A THRIVING COURT, BUSTLING WITH DECADENT WORSHIPPERS OF CHAOS FROM WHOM I MIGHT EXTRACT SOME WORD OF TZARKAN'S DOINGS!
BUT THIS PLACE IS DEAD, AND HAS BEEN FOR YEARS!
WHAT DO YOU SAY TO THAT NOW?
PAH! NOTHING BUT A DARK SILENCE! YOU ARE WORTHLESS!

EVENING COMES
MALUS DECIDES TO REST HERE FOR THE NIGHT AND THEN PRESS ON AT DAWN IN SEARCH OF A FRESH LEAD
HE DOES NOT KNOW WHAT HOUR OF THE NIGHT IT IS WHEN HE WAKES WITH A START. AT FIRST HE ISN'T EVEN SURE WHAT HAS ROUSED HIM.
THEN HE REALISES... IT IS THE SOUND OF RUNNING WATER...
THE FOUNTAIN !
HOW CAN THIS BE ?
BY THE WITCH KING !
HOW CAN *ANY* OF THIS BE !


AM I STILL DREAMING? OR HAS MY MIND RUN MAD?
IT IS NEITHER DREAM NOR MADNESS, NOBLE DRUCHII...

WELCOME TO MY COURT
STAY BACK ! WHO ARE YOU ?
I AM PRINCE EZRIEL, MASTER OF THE PALACE I BID YOU WELCOME
PUT AWAY YOUR SWORD IT IS LONG SINCE WE HAVE HAD A VISITOR AND I SENSE YOU COME HERE IN SEARCH OF ANSWERS
THIS PLACE WAS A RUIN WHEN I RODE IN! HOW IS IT REMADE SO ?
ONLY IN THE HOURS OF DARKNESS DOES MY COURT CONVENE WE SHUN THE LIGHT
COME EAT AND DRINK WITH US
MALUS CRAVES ANSWERS. SO HE JOINS THEM WARILY, KNOWING THAT IF ALL TURNS BAD HE WILL ONLY HAVE TO DEFEND HIMSELF UNTIL SUNRISE
FRIENDS! COURTIERS! WELCOME OUR GUEST
WELCOME THE NOBLE WARRIOR MALUS DARKBLADE
AFTER MONTHS OF HARDSHIP MALUS IS SO ASTONISHED AT THE LUXURY AND COMFORT OFFERED HIM HE DOES NOT EVEN QUESTION HOW THE PRINCE ALREADY KNOWS HIS NAME


SO YOU SEEK THE MIGHTY TZARKAN?
THE NATURE OF MY QUEST IS PROBABLY NOT FOR YOUR HEARING
I DOUBT ONE SUCH AS YOU WOULD RELISH THE DOOM I HAVE PLANNED FOR HIM.
BE ACKNOWLEDGE ALL THE LORDS OF CHAOS, AND FROM THEM ALL WE DERIVE OUR POWER AND LUXURY
BUT THEY ARE VILE UNTRUSTWORTHY CREATURES AND I CARE NOT WHAT BEFALLS ANY OF THEM
I KNOW FOR A FACT THAT TZARKAN AND THE ARMIES HE NOW CONTROLS ARE ACTIVE MANY LEAGUES FROM HERE IN THE DESERT BEYOND THE CRAGS OF FIRE AND ICE
THEY ARE RAISING A CITY IN HIS HONOUR
THEN AT LAST MY JOURNEY HAS A FOCUS!
INDEED, MY FRIEND BUT I THINK IT IS PERHAPS TIME YOU SET ASIDE YOUR WEARY QUEST. STAY HERE WITH US AND BECOME PART OF THE COURT.
WHAT?
I KNEW THAT SOONER OR LATER YOUR DARK DESIGNS WOULD MANIFEST!
I WILL NOT STAY HERE! WHEN THE SUN RISES AND CARRIES YOU ALL AWAY I WILL RIDE ON ALONE!

YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND, YOU ARE HERE NOW FOREVER.
THE EVENING WAS A THRESHOLD INTO DARKNESS THAT BROUGHT YOU TO MY COURT NOW YOU ARE HERE, THE SUN WILL NEVER RISE AGAIN
COME.. ANOTHER DRINK ?
NO !
YOU CANNOT DENY US YOU HAVE ENTERED THE DARK AND THERE IS NO WAY OUT
EMBRACE THE NIGHT JOIN MY COURT..
MALUS RUNS, YEARNING FOR THE FREEDOM OF DAYLIGHT TO TAKE HIM FROM THIS NIGHTMARE
THEN HE REALISES THAT DAWN SHOULD HAVE COME HOURS SINCE
THIS IS THE DARKNESS THE TREACHEROUS ORB FORETOLD..
NEXT- NIGHT WITHOUT END